

Thomas, Jack
Orig. Reserve Officers'
Association

More Openness Possible: CIA Aide

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"You cannot operate an intelligence operation in an atmosphere where anything that can be ferreted out is fair game for publication," a special assistant to the deputy CIA director said Saturday.

Maj. Gen. Jack E. Thomas said that "you cannot deal openly with intelligence operations without destroying the basis for it."

However, due to recent attention given the Central Intelligence Agency for alleged involvement in assassination plots, Thomas said that the public can look forward to getting "more information sooner."

"One of the things we are going to have is a greater openness in the release of substantive information."

"But we have to be extremely careful in protecting our sources and methods," said the former Air Force officer.

Thomas has been a senior CIA staff member since his Air Force retirement in 1969. He had served more than six years as the Asst. Chief of Staff, Intelligence, at Air Force Headquarters.

Nearly all of his military career since 1941 has been in



MAJ. GEN. JACK THOMAS

the intelligence field.

Thomas was the featured speaker Saturday at the state convention of the Reserve Officer's Association at the Downtowner Motel.

He made his remarks at a press conference prior to the speech.

As chief of the coordination staff of the Director of Central Intelligence, Thomas said he helps establish objectives on the nation's need for information in certain foreign countries.

This involves keeping track of foreign crisis areas such as world grain trends and OPEC investments, both of which would have an impact on U.S. security, he said.

For most of the 29-year his-

tory of the CIA, intelligence efforts have been focused on Russia, which is the only country which could physically threaten the U.S., he said.

However, in recent years the CIA has been taking a wider stance in intelligence operations throughout the world.

In his speech, he said he intended to emphasize what is in the future for the CIA.

One of the primary focuses will be the rebuilding of the agency's public image because of damage done by the agency's implication in assassination plots.

He defended the CIA implication in plots against Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba, Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and Chilean President Salvador Allende, saying that the plots are all history now.

Thomas said that the public would be able to better understand why those plots occurred if it could put itself into the powerfully anti-Com-

munist mood which prevailed in the U.S. during those years.

Another focus will be "demonstrating you can maintain a secret intelligence program in an open society. We're convinced we can and will," he said.

Third will be proving to the public that not all aspects of a successful intelligence operation can be made public, he said.